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DIRECTIONS

FOR

Devout Behaviour

IN THE

PUBLICK WORSHIP

OF

GOD.

Eccles. V. 1.

Keep thy Foot when thou goest to the House of GOD; and be more ready to hear, than to give the Sacrifice of Fools: for they consider not that they do Evil.

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DIRECTIONS FOR Devout Behaviour IN THE PUBLICK WORSHIP OF GOD.

Eccles. V. 1. *Keep thy Foot when thou goest to the House of GOD; and be more ready to hear, than to give the Sacrifice of Fools; for they consider not that they do Evil.*

I. THE *Church* is the *House of GOD:* *Keep* therefore *thy Foot when thou goest to the*

I. Of the Church, and the Reverence due to GOD therein.

House

Houſe of GOD. As Men that walk in Danger look to their Steps, and take Care where they ſet their Foot; ſo he that enters into the Houſe of Prayer, had need to enter with great Cautiouſneſs and Watchfulneſs: for he comes before a GOD who ſees his Thoughts, takes Notice of his Deſigns, and knows the moſt hidden Secrets of his Soul: He comes before a GOD that obſerves even his very Looks, and Poſtures, and Behaviour, and will at laſt call him to a ſtrict Account for his Careleſneſs and Irreverence.

II. The general Careleſneſs and Irreverence viſible in moſt Congregations.

II. Were theſe things ſeriouſly thought of, how could the Generality of us come into this Houſe with no greater Awe, and with as looſe Affections, as if we were going to a Play? How could we *ſtare* and *gaze about* at Prayer? How could we *let our Thoughts rove* and *wander*, while we ſeem to be engaged in Devotion? How could we hear with that *Indifferency*?

ference? How could we apply our ſelves to the Duties required of us, with that *Coldneſs* which is ſo viſible in moſt Congregations? How could we turn our Services into *meer Formalities*, and ſtand before the Great GOD *unconcerned*, and return from his Houſe without any Reliſh of the Myſteries of Godlineſs, or a due Senſe of Religion upon our Minds?

To ſee what Decency and Gravity Men obſerve in the Preſence of a *Prince*, and how little Regard we have to the Preſence of *a glorious GOD*, in the Houſe which He is pleaſed to call his Tabernacle and Dwelling-Place, is enough to make the holy Angels conclude, that in the midſt of his Temple we are Infidels.

The ſeveral Misbehaviours of Perſons in the Church.

1. To ſee how ſupinely ſome *ſit* at their Prayers, as if they were praying to a Stock, or a Stone.

2. To ſee others compoſe themſelves to *Sleep*,

as if the GOD they came to worſhip were (with *Baal*) aſleep too.

3. To ſee how ſome come *to ſhew their fine Cloaths and Faces*, as if only to be ſeen and taken Notice of, and to be admired by Spectators.

4. To ſee how others *ſtrive for Places*, for Superiority and the chief Seats in theſe Synagogues; and there vent their Pride, their Anger, and their Malice, where they ought to expreſs their greateſt Humility and Charity.

5. To obſerve how others *diſcourſe of their worldly Concerns* here, or behave themſelves as if they thought of nothing elſe. While others are *Whiſpering*, *Laughing*, and *making Remarks*, or paying their *Complements*, where they are to mind only the great Concerns of their immortal Souls.

To ſee all this, what can we infer, but that Men have no Senſe of the awful Majeſty on high, no Senſe of the Myſteries the very Angels deſire to look into?

Theſe things, my Brethren, ought not ſo to be.

III. When

III. When therefore thou goeſt into the Temple of the Lord, remember the Magnificence of that GOD at whoſe Footſtool thou goeſt to worſhip.

III. *Directions for our reverent Behaviour.*

1. *As we go to Church.*

When thou entereſt in at the Door of this Houſe, leave there thy worldly Thoughts and carnal Deſires, and come filled with the Spirit into the Tabernacle of the Lord.

2. *Entering into the Church.*

Firſt beg of GOD to prepare thy Heart: Then ſit, ſtand, and kneel there, as before the Searcher of all Hearts; reſolve to come away from thence edified, and with greater Store of ſpiritual Bleſſings than thou hadſt before.

3. *Entering into our Seat.*

4. *In time of Divine Service.*

In *Praying*, keep thy Mind diſengaged from all outward Objects; thy Voice from diſturbing thoſe about thee; thy Eyes in a compoſed and ſettled Poſture; free from all

all formal and Phariſaical Motions; and fix thy Thoughts only upon GOD, who heareth Prayer; and let thy whole outward Behaviour be ſuch as ſhall beſt expreſs thy inward Senſe of his Greatneſs and Holineſs.

In *Thankſgiving*, let thy Heart be enflamed with the loving Kindneſs of the Lord, and praiſe thy GOD with joyful Lips.

In *Hearing*, apply the general Admonitions, and Exhortations, and Reproofs, to thy own Soul.

In *Reading*, make ſome ſpiritual Reflexions on the Examples, Precepts, Promiſes, and Threatnings that are before thee.

In *Singing*, mind the *Matter* more than the Tune, and let thine Heart bear part in the Exerciſe.

In *receiving* the *Supper of the Lord*, let not the outward humble Poſture of thy Body be all the Service thou performeſt: but fix the Eyes of thine Underſtanding upon the Croſs of Chriſt, and there contemplate the Mercy that flows from it; and let the Conſideration of his in-

nfinite Love in dying for thee, a Sinner, make thee to abound in Love to GOD and Man, and utterly to abhor and forſake thoſe Sins which were the Cauſe of his Sufferings.

At thy coming out, give Glory to GOD, and beg that thou mayeſt not loſe the things that have been wrought in thee. And this is *to keep thy Foot when thou goeſt to the Houſe of GOD.* 5. *At coming out.*

A *Prayer* before *publick Service, when we come* to our Seat.

O GOD, be merciful to me a Sinner; and by the Inſpiration of thy holy Spirit, ſo cleanſe my Heart from all Sin and Careleſneſs, that I may perfectly

fectly love Thee, and offer up to Thee an acceptable Sacrifice, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer after *Service.*

GLory be to Thee, O Lord, who hast vouchsafed to admit me into thy House, to worship at thy Footstool. In Mercy pardon my Wandrings and Imperfections; and let the Sense of what I have now heard be so grafted in my Mind, as to bring forth in me the Fruits of good living, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

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